

like in Washington State. I am more concerned about somebody finding a job than I am about numbers on paper. But having said that, I want to repeat that we've got a plan to reduce the deficit in half in 5 years.

Final question, Bennett of the Houston Chronicle. I've known him for a long time. For those of you who don't know him, he's a fine lad. [Laughter]

Report on the February 1 Space Shuttle Columbia Accident

Q. And it's sort of a Texas-related question. Mr. President, next week there's going to be a report issued on the Space Shuttle *Columbia* that's expected to be highly critical of NASA. Do you support the resumption of manned space flights? Do you think the program should be better funded and restructured? Where do you see the future?

The President. Let me first—I've been a strong supporter of NASA. I want to look at the report before I comment. You may have seen the report; I haven't, in which case I want to look at it. I do believe that a space program is important for a country that is trying to stay on the leading edge of technological change. But let me look and first see what the report says, how critical it is, what it says, what it means. And I'll answer—try to answer that very question after I've had a chance to enrich my knowledge about a pending report.

Thank you all.

Birthday of Jennifer Loven

Q. It's her birthday.

The President. Today is your birthday?

Q. No. [Laughter]

Q. Yes, it is.

The President. You shouldn't be so shy in front of national cameras. [Laughter]

Q. I'd rather it not be a topic, thank you. [Laughter]

The President. Would you like for your compadres to break out in a "Happy Birthday" here on TV?

Q. They've already done that, thank you.

The President. They have? Should we have the business community sing? [Laughter] Happy birthday.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. at Boeing Field-King County International Airport. In

his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and former Iraqi Ba'ath Party official Ali Hassan al-Majid (known as "Chemical Ali"). A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on the Designation of Hamas Leadership and European Funding Sources Under Executive Order 13224

August 22, 2003

At my direction, the Treasury Department has moved today to block and freeze the assets of six top Hamas leaders and five non-governmental organizations that I am advised provide financial support to Hamas. By claiming responsibility for the despicable act of terror on August 19, Hamas has reaffirmed that it is a terrorist organization committed to violence against Israelis and to undermining progress toward peace between Israel and the Palestinian people.

I call upon all nations supportive of peace in the Middle East to recognize Hamas as a terrorist organization and to take all appropriate actions to deny it support.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

August 16

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

August 18

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham to discuss the recent power black-out in portions of the Northeastern and Midwestern United States and Canada.